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AUTHOR Bates, Richard
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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a critique of the corporate-management culture manifested in Australian education systems and institutions. It is argued that in Australia, the drive toward a market culture is a form of administrative achievement that turns culture into commodities. One of the major features of the current educational reform context is a substantial increase in demands, accompanied by a severe decline in the proportion of national wealth directed toward educational activities. The market model is viewed as a strategy to protect middle-class privilege. A key effect of market policies is the redistribution of public resources away from those most in need. The devolution of education is accompanied by new forms of control: a performance-based national curriculum; a national testing system that allows inaccurate comparisons; budgets that are linked to performance; and a curriculum that ignores social, cultural, and ethic understandings. An examination of the perceived anti-educational impact of a "corporatist" culture concludes with a call to educators to show their commitment to a caring, just, morally responsible, compassionate and ecologically aware society. (LMI)

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Educational Administration as Cultural Practice

Richard Bates

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The Australian College of Education
42 Geils Court, Deakin ACT 2600
PO Box 323, Curtin ACT 2605
Ph: (06) 281 1677
Fax: (06) 285 1262

Preface

In 1992 the National Council of the Australian College of Education identified fourteen 'key policy issues' requiring action. At the top of the list was the issue of the impact of corporate management on education.

This paper by Richard Bates provides a significant critique of the corporate management culture as it has been made manifest in Australian education systems and institutions.

Professor Bates concludes his examination of what he sees as the damaging and anti-educational impact of a 'corporatist' culture by calling on educators to show their 'commitment to a caring, just, morally responsible, compassionate and ecologically aware society'.

The paper was first delivered at a joint session of the national conferences of the Council for Educational Administration and the Australian College of Education held in Darwin in July 1992. The College wishes to thank the Australian Council for Educational Administration for allowing the paper to be published as part of the College Occasional Paper Series.

Cherry Collins
Publications Chair

Educational Administration as Cultural Practice

Richard Bates

TAKE from the individual all that is society, said Rousseau, and you are left with only blind sensation (Paraphrased in Pusey 1991, 242).

In the white beginning Australia was the empty country: terra nullius. Since that beginning we whites have established a banana of population curving from Brisbane to Adelaide via Sydney and Melbourne and a couple of lemons in Darwin and Perth. To us, though not to its original owners, the rest is still empty country. The intellectual landscape is not unlike the physical one. The fruits of our intellectual endeavour are grafted precariously on the edge of our social needs. The rootstock onto which our aspirations might be grafted is alien and inhospitable to our desires. The media which should celebrate our identity and culture are owned exclusively by men who seem uninterested in anything except their own fortunes and the securing of those political and economic conditions that will ensure their increase. The million unemployed, the further millions of their dependents, the hundreds of thousands more who live below the poverty line and the tens of thousands of homeless old and young are an embarrassing by-product of 'what had to be done' in the pursuit of such ends: the deregulation of the financial sector, the 'opening up' of industry to the world economy, the toughening of our competitive

capacities, the weeding out of those unable to survive; in short, the enforcement of a sort of industrial eugenics movement in which the right to life is determined somewhere other than Australia.

Whatever happened to the 1950s: those years where a new world and a new Australia were being planned; those years of full employment in increasingly decent jobs; those years where the rewards of effort and a good education could lead to socially useful work in the expanding middle class; those years where a good apprenticeship could lead to your own business and a secure and prosperous future; those years where government was concerned with cultural identity, education, health; and where the welfare of the people was coincidental with the welfare of the state.

It seems clear, in retrospect, that somewhere in the 1980s we lost our way, though the seeds of our current predicament were sown much earlier in our universities (Pusey 1991). The seeds were, oddly enough, not sown by the intellectual communists of whom Menzies and Santamaria were so afraid. On the contrary, the seeds of our current destruction were sown by those eminently respectable pin striped technicians occupying the faculties of law and, most particularly, of economics (Pusey 1991).

The state in Australia was strong enough to withstand the subversion of left wing 'extremists' in the '50s; of the civil rights movement in the '60s; of Vietnam protesters in the '70s; of the feminist and ecological protests in the '80s. Indeed the state has, in certain limited but significant ways, been influenced by such social movements, for the Australian state has been regarded since Alfred Deakin as acting (at least potentially) on behalf of and in the interests of the people as a whole; in the interests of those who work to ensure the continuity of the state. For Deakin, this was an historic, though only partially realised, achievement.

The notion that the state should act for and on behalf of the people as a whole was the basis of the Australian social democracy which, for the first half of the twentieth century, was a model social democracy for the world. It was the basis of a nation state which had clearly declared its intention to serve the people rather than the 'market'. A

hundred years later 'as Canberra is swept by a locust strike of economic rationalism' (Pusey 1991, 1) this declaration is under severe attack and education is in the thick of the battle.

The battle is both a cultural battle and an administrative battle.

Culture is what gives meaning to life. Culture is the intellectual framework that connects beliefs, values and knowledge with action. Culture is sedimented deeply into the unconsciousness of individuals through the routinisation of action . Administration is part of the process that facilitates or inhibits collective action through the mobilisation of resources and the routinisation of action. Administration inevitably, therefore, not only produces and reproduces, but is also saturated with cultural concerns.

This, of course, is a heresy. Decades of textbooks in administrative theory have insisted on the technical and indeed the 'scientific' nature of administration where administration is defined simply as the handmaiden of a political process which, in some supposedly separate sphere, allocates the values that are to be implemented by administrators. The consequence of this doctrine is the imposition of a hierarchy which (theoretically and often practically) depoliticises administrators in terms of the part they could play in the *upward* thrust of policy formation from the grass roots of community involvement, while it simultaneously politicises them almost completely in terms of their role in the *downward* thrust of policy implementation.

Now the real world is a lot less tidy than this model would suggest. There is plenty of evidence that senior administrators are caught up in the policy determination process (Aberbach *et al* 1981; Pusey 1991). There is plenty of evidence that communities are inventive and effective in reinterpreting and resisting official policy (Ball 1990). However, the model has a persuasive ring of authority in the everyday world of us middle level administrators who are continually caught up in the traffic between policy directives and community needs. What we experience as a two way traffic is defined by our masters as a one way street.

The consequences of this tension are far from trivial either for the middle level managers whose levels of stress and anxiety are raised considerably by the subsequent conflicts (Carr 1991) or for the society as a whole when its leaders insist on ignoring the direct advice of informed and experienced middle level administrators and prefer to rely on statistical indicators that provide distant snapshots of reality. These snapshots are not unlike those relayed from the nose cones of smart bombs during the Gulf war: snapshots which disappear at the moment a 'hit' has been achieved and thus obliterate any real knowledge of the consequences. Between the image and the reality falls a very long shadow.

And this is not a trivial point. As Todd Gitlin (1992) recently pointed out in an article called 'Uncivil Society' those who are responsible for current social and economic policies have a 'need *not* to know' and certainly not to *experience* , in anything other than a transitory manner, the reality of the social disorganisation that accompanies their insistence on the privileging of the market over the needs of the people. Speaking in the context of the decline of the once great cities of the United States Gitlin says:

> Our last two presidents have lived in cities, all right, but in the *privileged zones*. When speaking of welfare dependency or drugs, they have the air of wounded innocents, shocked and offended at suffering and violence, but from a considerable distance, as if the danger were that the suffering and violence might spill over into their enclave. And as for J. Danforth Quayle, George Bush's gift to comedians, he has the look and sound of someone who hasn't a clue about how people without trust funds live. But ignorance is not only a matter of birth. It has to be worked at. These men have a need *not* to know what life is like in the broken mill towns, on the mean streets. Their hearts are elsewhere — chopping wood on the ranch, blasting through the water at Kennebunkport. They live in a world of putting greens, not devastated blacks ... Meanwhile ... the

> stretch limos glide past the bus stops where the long lines have to wait. On the mean streets the police can't keep up with common crime, while America's fastest growing occupation is — security guards (Gitlin 1992, 15).

It is, of course, a commonplace that the location of the Commonwealth Government in Canberra has always provided something of the same protection for our leaders. As they pursue their collections of French clocks and Ferarris in the erotic grandeur of a building, the reality of which surpasses even the most feverish dreams of megalomaniac used car salesmen, are they also being encouraged not to know?

The point I am making is not simply for amusement or for the cheap derogation of political office. The point I wish to make is the one that Gitlin makes: that the culture of a divided society must be worked at in order to be sustained and it must be worked at simultaneously at the political, the administrative and the personal levels. And make no doubt about it, we are a divided society. As Phil Raskall points out:

> Let's get a few facts straight. Australia is one of the most unequal societies in the world ... (Among the advanced nations) Australia ranks third highest in poverty (exceeded only by the U.S. and Canada) and third in affluence (behind the U.S and the Netherlands). The consequence is that Australia has the lowest proportion of families lying between the extremes of poverty and affluence — the smallest economic middle class, barring the U.S. (Raskall 1992, 9).

Moreover:

> Over the decade (of the 1980s) the share of the bottom 40 per cent has decreased from 7.6 per cent to 6.1 per cent whereas that of the top 20 per cent has increased from 48 per cent to 51.7 per cent (Raskall 1992, 9).

And that was from census data predating our current recession and the subsequent high levels of unemployment among the newly poor.

These increasing disparities in wealth were, moreover, policy created: that is they are directly related to the deregulation of financial markets, the reintroduction of tax incentives for speculative investment in the non-industry sector and the 'restructuring' of industry, as well as by the effects of the Accord. As Pusey puts it, during the 1980s:

> ... economic rationalism and its panoply of 'reforms' and 'structural adjustments' have resulted in a fall in the real value of wages and salaries of upwards of 10 per cent and, just as in Britain and the United States, an upward redistribution of national income from wages and salaries to profit share. Since the business and managerial beneficiaries of this redistribution are such a small fraction of the population, the redistribution represents a massive increase in wealth for them. The 'reforms' have failed even in their own terms and the upward redistribution of income signals failure on even the most utilitarian criterion of the greatest (economic) good for the greatest number (Pusey 1991, 240).

Moreover, these crude indicators of increased disparities in wealth hide other divisions, for poverty is most characteristic among women, migrants, Aborigines and the very young and very old. Increases in the maldistribution of wealth affect such groups disproportionately (1).

These changes are not simply economic. They are also cultural. That is, a profound challenge to Australia's cultural history is being mounted. That challenge is nothing less than the attempt to turn Australia away from its commitment to the state as a fundamental organising principle and towards its replacement by the market.

The challenge, as you will have noted, has captured the dominant groups in each of our major political parties which are themselves

divided between those who are committed to the state as a fundamental organising structure which protects and extends the interests of the people as a whole (or, at the very least, protects the interests of the least advantaged) and those who are committed to the market as an organising structure which sorts out winners and losers and eliminates losers from the system.

The question of whose interests are served by the differing organising principles is of fundamental importance. It is a question that strikes right at the heart of the notion of the state, for, we are told, in the emerging international context the state is of marginal importance in the organisation of the global economy. Its sole remaining role is dependent upon its capacity to organise the population through educational, policing and employment policies in ways which serve that part of the global economy which is allocated to a particular state at a particular time.

A coincidental question to that of whose interests are to be served is that of *who* is making these crucial choices on 'our' behalf? Pusey puts the issues like this:

> How and with what resource do nations 'choose'? Who is the subject and the 'we' that chooses? ... In taking up these questions from a sociological point of view, it is clear that Australia's future turns on competing models of social organisation and, more specifically, over which of the two competing coordinating structures — market or state — will be favoured and of how it will be applied.
>
> One clear answer is presented, in both theory and practice, by the libertarian New Right. The subject of the choice is that part of 'the market' and of 'your' Australian economy that is geared, integrated, and subordinated to 'our' international economy — in the Australian case this means a numerically small 'elite' of economists, corporate accountants, merchant bankers, and businessmen. Australia is probably already well along this fork of a road that was taken

> both by default and with some help from Trojan horses who were moved into place at least a decade ago and amid a population that was fast asleep, as the Minister of Science (then Barry Jones) insists (2). On this model of Australia's future the market is the 'independent variable' and both democracy and culture... are dependent variables. This is ... the post-modern 'society without culture' in which liberty is reduced to increasing consumption with decreasing income. The 'intervening variable' is a withering state premised on American elite democracy in which politics comes down at the national level, as Gore Vidal puts it, to a choice of 'one political party with two right wings' (Pusey 1991, 235).

I put this picture to you not only because of its fundamental insights into the nature of the challenge we face, but also because of its deep commitment to the rebuilding of an alternative culture that celebrates society and social aspirations as the independent variable, placing the economy as the dependent variable: the servant rather than the master of our future.

Earlier I refered to culture as that which gives meaning to life; that integration of beliefs, values and knowledge with action which gives purpose to existence. As such, culture carries and articulates both our fears and our aspirations. Currently much of our culture is driven by fears: of unemployment, poverty, rejection, loss of self-respect, loss of control, drugs, AIDS, general social disorganisation and the values that accompany such fears: self-interest, survival at all costs, a bitter dismissal of our shared future.

These fears are contextualised within a more general framework, as Young points out, one in which:

> the democratic utopias peopled by rational educated citizens, which were drawn from the dream of the Enlightenment, have everywhere been overtaken by a pervasive sense of limitation (Young 1990, 7).

Or, as Habermas suggests:

> The future is occupied with the merely negative: on the threshold of the 21st Century we find the terrifying panorama of a world wide threat to the interests of life in general: the spiral of the arms race, uncontrolled proliferation of automatic weapons, structural impoverishment of developing countries, unemployment and growing social imbalance in developed countries, problems of overburdening the environment, and the nearly catastrophic operations of high technology are the catch words that penetrate by way of the mass media into public consciousness (Habermas 1986 in Young 1990, 7).

But this gloomy view of the future contrasts vividly with the cultural aspirations of key groups in Australian society, groups which, in my assessment, are far more representative of the aspirations of Australians as a whole. A recent study of the aspirations of 'persons engaged in science, humanities, social sciences, the arts, law, immigration, urban design, business, union affairs, medicine, religion, community services, trade, conservation, education (from pre-school teachers through school principals to administrators of universities) reports a very different picture:

> ... the Australians in our study promote an alternative view of humankind — one of a caring, just, morally responsible, compassionate and ecologically aware species. The overwhelming endorsement of the goal of social justice and the emphasis on interpersonal goals such as caring for others indicate a shift towards what Schumacher (1975) labelled almost two decades ago 'people centred theories' of dealing with social organisation. People should matter in the future Australian society where all members are assured of equitable chances of developing their potentials and sharing equitably in what their society has to offer (Campbell *et al* 1992, 2).

It is not too difficult to see how such views connect with those traditions of social democracy whose roots cling precariously to the edge of our 'rationalised' Australian economy. Such a view insists on the intimate connection between the people's welfare and the operation of the state as a regulating mechanism driven by social ideals. Such a view does not deny the importance or appropriateness of the market as a mechanism for achieving certain ends but it does insist on the subordination of markets to the primacy of the state.

Let me put this another way. Adam Smith, whose face adorns the ties worn so proudly and offensively by members of the right wing H.R. Nichols society would have disowned their insistence that the state be the servant of the market. For Smith, the context of the market was always that of the 'commonwealth,' the improvement of which was the historical purpose of economic activity: the market was the servant of social improvement. Indeed the very operations of the market were dependent on the cultural production of values on which the market depends — honesty, integrity, consistency, recognition of common interests and advantage. The market cannot produce these values and it cannot exist without them. Gitlin puts it this way:

> Now that Soviet style socialism is defunct, 'the Market' is the world's leading utopia ... But a working market requires something that buccaneer capitalism cannot deliver — a shared commons where the market takes place. A healthy society requires, and produces, a spirit of civility — a generosity of feeling, a widespread commitment to the furtherance of the common conversation about the common good. To use an old fashioned term, civil society cultivates and requires civic virtue. The ideal of Main Street ... is one in which neighbours watch out for one another. But today the ideals of Main Street are constantly eaten away by the pursuit of the main chance ... When marketplace reasoning predominates everywhere, the war of all against all explodes the provisional truces. In everyday life, social responsibility decomposes ... In the culture, the dissolution of solidarity in the solvent

> of indiscriminate rage gives us the embattled, desperado masculinity of slash and grunt movies (Gitlin 1992, 16).

Culture therefore both sustains and depends upon the production and reproduction of Main Street — of that commons where neighbours watch out for each other. Even the market is dependent upon the continuation of Main Street, of the notions of civic virtue which its untrammelled operations constantly undermine. A market society without Main Street is a slash and grunt society.

Now what has all this got to do with education — and most particularly with educational administration ?

Education is a fundamental process through which identity is constructed. Schooling is a major part of this, though education now takes place within a much wider context than in previous generations (3). The construction of identity and the construction of culture are inseparable. Just as the self is constructed and reconstructed through a systematic integration and clarification of beliefs, values, and knowledge in the light of experience, so is the culture constructed and reconstructed through the collective articulation of beliefs, values and knowledge through social action. On Main Street individual experience and social action coincide.

Schooling, however, is a deliberate administrative intervention in the life of Main Street. Schooling constructs curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in ways which are always a partial representation of the range of beliefs, values and knowledge, (let alone the actions) of people within the wider society. And here is the nub of the problem.

Education, as Stephen Kemmis reminds us, is about the provision of cultural maps, the point of which 'is not merely to represent the world, but also to galvanise people to act in it' (Kemmis 1992, 31). This being so, we have to ask what kind of maps, or more precisely, *whose* maps are to constitute the substance of schooling, remembering that these maps are not solely cognitive, they also galvanise people to action of particular kinds.

The age in which we live, the age called by some the 'post-modern' age, exhibits contradictory tendencies. In the first place, the emergence of

the market on a global basis is accompanied by a globalisation, a universalisation, a standardisation, selection and allocation of culture on an unprecedented scale. There has been increased international standardisation of:

- products (Coca-cola, McDonalds, washing powder, toothpaste and medicines)
- images (Cable Network News, political theatre, war)
- activities (the Olympics, World Cups of various kinds)
- financial transactions (ForEx trading, Visa, Mastercard)
- electronic information (AAREnet, Bitnet, Email)
- amusements (Nintendo, pay-TV, Disneyland).

This moves us towards a mass, global culture. The cognitive map provided by such a culture persuades us that experience is universal ('the whole world is like this') and galvanises individuals to a particular form of action: consumption ('I consume therefore I am').

What is noticeable about this market culture, apart from the fact that it both totalises and individualises culture, is that it is an *administrative* achievement which asserts a particular form of routinised control over experience. It is a form of administrative achievement which turns culture (that which gives meaning to life through the integration of beliefs, values and knowledge with action) into commodities. Culture, which is historically the result of painful struggles to integrate the collected knowledge, values, beliefs and experience of real people, is commodified. Culture is turned into a product like any other product which the individual can choose and purchase according to particular means (4).

One outstanding characteristic of this transformation is its exclusion of the social. In market culture, the individual relates to culture via the mechanism of purchase. The 'value' of culture (beliefs, values, knowledge and experience) is determined in the market by price and volume of sales. The individual's capacity to accumulate 'culture' is directly related to wealth and the shrewdness of 'investment' decisions (5). The cumulative result of such decisions is a declaration of what is valued by the society. Thus, as astrology is a much bigger

seller than astronomy, the 'value' of astrology is greater than that of astronomy. And here a dangerous sleight of hand occurs; because astrology is more 'valued' it is therefore, according to market criterion more 'valid' at least in the democracy of consumption.

What is missing from such 'decisions' is any observable intellectual content, any argument, any debate, any *social* consideration of value or validity. No-one has discussed the relative value. It simply emerges from market choices — and the market is to decide (6).

Such an approach presents real problems for education where, if nothing else, the common ground in all approaches to education is the assumption that 'what is to be taught should be *true*"(Young 1990, 89). Moreover there is a further difficulty arising from the exclusion of the social for, as Rousseau suggested: 'take from the individual all that is society ... and you are left with blind sensation' (Pusey 1991, 242). And the blind sensation might be either the 'satisfaction' of consumption or the rage of dispossesion.

But, clearly, the culture provided by the market is, because of its exclusion of the social, unable to satisfy the needs of individuals for any depth of meaning in their existence. 'I purchase, therefore I am' (with its concomitant 'I cannot purchase therefore I am *not*') is as inadequate a definition of the self as it is a mechanism for the construction of culture. The evidence is clear and consistent:

> ... commodities, and the income to purchase them, are only weakly related to the things that make people happy ... autonomy, self-esteem, family felicity, tension-free leisure, and friendship (Lane 1978 in Offe 1985, 43)

But what is the alternative?

The alternative is the recovery of the state as a mechanism for articulating social aspirations and giving priority to social need. In this process administration and education are crucial.

It is somewhat conventional now to argue that post-modern society is characterised by the development of mass, global systems of production, distribution and commodification which are systematically

breaking up the old institutions of cultural formation — family, church, school — which previously provided grand narratives or visions of social futures. Indeed, there is much evidence that this is the case. However, what such an argument ignores is the rise of social movements around such issues as civil rights (most particularly those of blacks, women and cultural minorities); ecological issues (especially those concerned with environmental exploitation, pollution, and the missapplication of 'high' technology); and, increasingly, the impoverishment of the third world by first world economics.

Such movements connect knowledge, values, beliefs, experience and action in ways which are fundamentally social — that is they are concerned and articulated through an awareness of social need and a commitment to social justice. They recognise fundamental divisions which have no legitimate defence while recognising fundamental differences which potentially enrich our common social future. They are cultural achievements of a high order. They integrate knowledge, beliefs and values in ways which make sense of experience and encourage commitment to action. They fall squarely within the realm identified by Jack Campbell and his colleagues in the World Educational Fellowship survey as one which articulates a commitment to a shared social future in which the state pursues the realisation of human need rather than accepts a subsidiary position to the market which pursues the realisation of wealth for the few at the expense of the many (Campbell *et al* 1992).

Clearly such a vision of the state and its responsibilities in education demands a process of administration and an experience of education which is dramatically at odds with current policy as it is articulated within most of the English speaking world: Britain, Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand.

While the situation in the United States has always been somewhat confused in terms of national educational policy (it has never had one), the historical purpose of education in the other countries has been a reasonably consistent migration during the twentieth century from early concerns with the establishment of universal access to primary education as consistent with the pursuit of democracy;

through secondary education as the middle class expanded along with the state; and now into a much broader access to tertiary education and the reduction of its role as 'gatekeeper' to the professions.

This progression was driven by social aspirations aimed at replacing an inheritable aristocracy of wealth with an aristocracy of talent through equal access; a growing understanding that equal opportunity within the system was a prerequisite of social justice; towards an attempt to achieve more equal outcomes through positive discrimination. Schooling, at least in terms of policy, has been increasingly driven by changing notions of social justice derived from an increasing commitment to reducing gross social inequalities through educational opportunity. There are obvious limits to this where education systems operate within societies whose economic systems are based upon principles which sustain deep social divisions. But as far as education's role, as part of the state's attempt to meet social aspirations and ameliorate social need, the connection between social justice, democracy and education has been of considerable substance. As Bob Connell reminds us, education has a fundamental connection with human emancipation though it is continually in danger of being captured by other interests (Connell *et al* 1982).

Contemporary government policies are somewhat confused. On the one hand, governments advocate 'giving the schools to the people' through processes of devolution in which parental choice and community participation allow schools to be better connected with cultural aspirations (7).

On the other hand one key mechanism in achieving this is clearly the introduction of market or quasi-market mechanisms into educational policy in a direct form. This is clearest in New Zealand and England where the commodification of education within a deliberately constructed market for educational services and products is a dominant feature of government policy. There are also strong advocates of this approach in the United States (Chubb and Moe 1990).

Australian and Canadian policy is somewhat more confused but shares some of the same structural mechanisms — even if the rhetoric that surrounds such restructuring carries echoes of partially discarded social aspirations. For instance, the claim that the

restructuring of the Australian economy to serve the interests of the international market economy will serve the ends of increasing social justice in Australia continues to be made despite the overwhelming evidence that such restructuring is increasing divisions within society, impoverishing large sectors of the population and alienating more and more people from a political process that is no longer responsive to collective social aspirations.

One of the key features of such restructuring is the transfer of resources from the public to the private sectors in the belief that such transfers increase efficiency and create employment. The press for smaller government and lower taxes is, however, frequently accompanied by a demand for increased levels of public services. Education and health are two areas where this trend is particularly evident.

In Australian education, for example, there has been an explosive increase in overall numbers at the same time as there has been a precipitate decline in the proportion of national wealth devoted to education. Moreover, while there seems to be a widespread myth that the education system is failing the evidence indicates that it is responsible for some remarkable achievements.

For instance, since 1983 total enrolments in our educational institutions have fluctuated around the three million mark but enrolments in higher education have risen from 718,400 students to 928,500 — a 29 per cent increase. According to Finn (Finn 1991) there will be a further increase, if current trends persist, to 1,052,000 students by 2001 — a further 13 per cent increase. This looks like, indeed it is, the result of a herculean national effort — at least on the part of educators.

Most notably, however, it is an effort that has been made within an astounding decrease in the proportion of national wealth devoted to education. In 1983 the proportion of national wealth devoted to education was 5.7 per cent. By 1991 that had fallen to 4.2 per cent and it is projected by Finn to decline further to 3.5 per cent by 2001. That is, by 2001 we can expect fully a third of the share of national wealth previously allocated to education to have been removed. For educational institutions to have absorbed such astounding increases

in load while being deprived of such a significant portion of national wealth is an accomplishment of the most extraordinary kind.

Moreover, the success of the system has not been simply in accommodating more students under declining financial circumstances. The success has also been in adapting rapidly to expansion at what is arguably the most difficult level of the system — post-compulsory education. To have accommodated some 80 per cent of students in year 12 compared with the 30 per cent that finished year twelve a decade ago is a substantial accomplishment. To have made appropriate adaptations in the upper secondary curriculum in the teeth of vocal opposition from an entrenched cultural elite is a further achievement. To have maintained standards in the face of such changes and the enormous expansion in the range of ability is extraordinary.

And these achievements have been won by teachers and administrators in the face of a substantial decline in personal circumstances. While the real value of wages fell by some 10 per cent for the Australian workforce as a whole during the 1980s the relative value of teachers' wages fell even faster. In 1977 teachers' salaries across Australia were 104.5 per cent of average weekly earnings. In 1988 they had fallen to 90 per cent (Schools Council 1990). Coupled with the 10 per cent decline in average weekly earnings this fall can be seen to have led to a serious decline in the financial circumstances of teachers. This is a particularly serious problem in the context of an ageing teaching force, many of whom have reached the limits of incremental progression and for whom promotional opportunities do not exist. The considerable confusion which surrounds the introduction of 'Advanced Skills Teacher' categories has produced only a slight amelioration of a major problem.

Universities have faced similarly massive increases in enrolments, and substantial decreases in the percentage of GDP allocated. This has resulted in deteriorating infrastructure and conditions as well as substantial conflict between 'market' rhetoric and tighter control over 'profiles' via corporate management. This has led in turn to a massive internal reallocation of resources away from teaching and research towards an expanded senior executive.

TAFE is also in considerable confusion as a result of a combination of financial starvation and reordering of its student population. Last year NSW TAFE actually shed some 18,000 students, partly by closing down significant opportunities in adult education which were non vocational. One might have expected that this was in order to expand training opportunities. However, unfortunately for TAFE, the demand for apprenticeship training, which was once the mainstay of TAFE, has collapsed. The scale of this collapse is shown in Victoria where the number of apprenticeships has fallen from 18,169 in 1989 to 8,750 in 1991. This within a context where 52,000 young people under 20 are out of work (Parkinson 1992). Meanwhile the connection of TAFE Institutes to industry via the Training Divisions proceeds slowly and with considerable confusion amid the rhetoric of rationalisation and competency based training (Ramsey 1992).

One of the major features of the context within which education is currently being reshaped is, therefore, a substantial increase in demands accompanied by a severe decline in the proportion of national wealth directed towards educational activities. In order to achieve the increased efficiencies required by such policies governments have all but deleted middle management, for as Caldwell and Spinks observe, somewhat coyly:

> ... when priorities have been re-ordered or reductions in expenditure made, a curtailment of central and regional services has been a more acceptable course for governments to take than cut-backs at the school level (Caldwell and Spinks 1992, 17).

These features are policy driven. They are a direct result of government determinations which alienate public resources in the rather vague hope that private institutions will take up the 'slack'.

The result for school level administrators and teachers is a demand that they continue to do more and more with less and less: fewer resources, deteriorating infrastructure, poorer support services. In such circumstances the rhetoric of the 'self managing school' becomes identified more with a battle for survival in what Connors (Schools Council 1989) calls a 'semi-privatised' system than with the

ideal articulated in the 1980s: school-based decision making within the context of progressive educational reform.

Despite the explicit disavowal of any connection between their model of the self managing school and the adoption of a market model of schooling Caldwell and Spinks (1992, 191ff) are rightly nervous about the association. There is increasing evidence, for example, that in England the adoption of the market model is not simply an attempt to increase efficiency, performance and participation but a strategy to protect middle class privilege. As Ball suggests:

> The implementation of market reforms in education is essentially a class strategy which has as one of its major effects the reproduction of relative class (and ethnic) advantages and disadvantages (Ball 1992, 2).

Such a policy is perfectly consistent with Thatcher's denial of the social represented in her often quoted remark that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and families' which Guttman (1987) interprets within the context of her commitment to what he calls 'a state of families' which places:

> educational (and all other social authority) exclusively in the hands of parents, thereby permitting parents to choose a way of life consistent with their familial heritage (Guttman in Ball 1992, 4).

The accumulating evidence from the English experiment is that only some families are able to 'exercise choice'. Because of the oversubscription of some popular schools it is much more the case that such schools are able to choose their clients than that parents can gain access to the schools of their choice. The result is a market created 'exclusivity' which directly serves the purpose of distinction. This is a result which some consumers welcome. As Ball suggests:

> For some consumers the point about choice is that they 'require' exclusivity and/or performance advantage. The sort of schooling they value is that sort which is difficult to get into and which produces superior performance outcome. If all or many

> schools could offer the same service then the market system would have failed them (Ball 1992, 9).

Ironically, such exclusivity is directly a result of particular schools being able to select their incoming clientele so as to ensure high performance irrespective of what goes on inside the school. Exclusivity is its own reward.

The corollary of such an effect is that forms of 'difference' that are less valued by popular schools are rather more poorly served. Such seems to be the case in England, as Geoff Whitty observes:

> Current reforms would seem to relate to a version of post-modernity that emphasises 'distinction' and 'hierarchy' within a fragmented social order, rather than one that positively celebrates 'difference' and 'heterogeneity.' ... This will have particular consequences for the predominantly working class and black populations who inhabit the inner cities. While they never gained an equitable share of educational resources under social democratic policies, the abandonment of planning in favour of the market seems unlikely to provide a solution (Whitty 1991, 19-20).

One of the key effects of policies which turn us towards the market is, therefore, the redistribution of public resources away from those in most need towards those in least need. It is an effect recognised by the advocates of market mechanisms such as Chubb and Moe who agree that:

> The unequal distribution of income in society may bias certain markets in favour of the rich and against the poor ... To the extent that these imperfections are serious, markets are less likely to generate the diversity, quality and levels of services that consumers want (Chubb and Moe 1990, 34).

This, however, is not an imperfection to which they devote much attention. The reason for this is clearly an ideological one. Equity is

not a consideration within the ideology of the market. Market ideology is based upon a doctrine, not of social cooperation, but upon competitive self interest. Ball, again:

> The introduction of market mechanisms is not simply the adoption of a neutral mechanism, it also involves the socialisation of key actors into a new value system ... The market requires a reorientation of producers from a service ethic towards a sense of competitive self interest (Ball 1992, 14).

Or, as Ransom (1990) argues:

> ... markets require a shift in focus from the collective and the community to the individual, from public service to private service, and from the other to the self. They redefine the meaning of such terms as rights, citizenship and democracy. Civil and welfare rights and civic responsibility give way to market rights in a consumer democracy. Clearly, in promoting the marketisation of education, policy makers seek to promote and tap into a cult of educational selfishness in the national interest. Buying an education becomes a substitute for getting an education. Educational democracy is redefined as consumer democracy in the educational shopping mall (in Kenway 1992, 15-16).

In a fully fledged market, where teacher and administrator incomes are tied to market performance, it also replaces the altruism of public service producers by naked self-interest, creating motivations which are tied solely to self-aggrandisment (Kenway 1992, 20).

What is clear is that few teachers see current reforms as enhancing their professional interests or improving the conditions for teaching and learning.

Partly, the reason for this is accounted for by the contradiction between the massive increases in governmental demands and the substantially reduced support and income discussed above. Partly,

also, it may well be due to the ways in which recent policies have been formulated. Almost without exception State policy documents such as *Better Schools* (Western Australia), *A Search for Excellence* (Northern Territory) and *School Renewal* (New South Wales) regard teachers as a barrier to change: 'Change is still conceived as being the problem of someone in authority dragging the reluctant teacher forward' (Blackmore 1992, 4).

And there is some truth in this, for teachers' day to day experience very often contradicts government policy. As Blackmore suggests various research studies 'indicate that teacher reluctance to implement particular policies unquestionably is based largely upon their substantive knowledge and experience of how it may detrimentally affect their students' (Blackmore 1992, 4). Once again, as I suggested earlier, teachers' experience of two-way traffic is denied by government's declaration of a one way street (8).

Moreover, such policies contextualise the 'self-managing school' within an hierarchical administrative context. While it is the all but universal case that intermediate bureaucracies have been whittled down in size and effectiveness so that the organisation resembles a coat hanger rather than a pyramid, it is certainly not the case that self managing schools are to be indeed self managing. Simultaneous with the declaration of policies of devolution new forms of control are being put in place which promise even tighter control over school performance.

Firstly, there is a significant shift towards a much clearer prescription of national curricula which are interpretable in terms of 'competencies' and' performance standards'. Secondly, national systems of testing are being devised which will allow the monitoring of performance of pupils, teachers and schools on a comparative basis. In some instances, as for instance in England, comparisons between schools are not to be presented in terms of educational gains but simply in terms of raw scores. This creates a hierarchy of distinction independent of the quality of the educational intervention made by the school. Thirdly, financial mechanisms of control are being established that link budgets to 'performance' in ways that tightly restrict schools' options.

Moreover, the nature of the curriculum being developed as a 'guide' to educational performance is notably lacking in any of those social and cultural learnings that might be associated with the acquisition of civic virtue. Despite its protestations the Finn Committee Report (1991) narrows the cultural curriculum to the study of three things: understanding and knowledge of Australia's historical, geographic and political context; understanding major global issues; and understanding the world of work. The Mayer Committee (1992), whose job it was to fill out the sketch provided by Finn, reduces this slender commitment even further: 'After lengthy deliberation, the Committee has concluded that it is not possible to identify Key Competency Strands which focus specifically on Cultural Understanding' (Mayer 1992, 10).

Moreover, such cultural concerns are treated separately from the issues of 'Personal Development', as though the processes of personal and cultural formation were somehow distinct.

'Ethics' is, likewise, detached from cultural understanding while 'problem solving' appears (somewhat incoherently) as both a 'Key Area' and a 'Competency Strand', and is detached from the social and cultural contexts of disagreement over values, courses of action, and competition between interests.

What this indicates is not that the Mayer Committee is necessarily barking up the wrong tree — indeed its declared commitment to a broad curriculum and assessment that furthers the development of learning are to be welcomed. Rather, it is an indication of the confusion inherent in taking such policy formation processes out of the hands of people with experience of educational issues. As McTaggart has remarked:

> The pace of these centralised bids for control of the national curriculum is a weak expression of participatory democracy and not much of an expression of representative democracy despite claims that the committees are 'representative' — they aren't. Where are the students? The educational researchers? The teacher educators ... ? (McTaggart 1992, 5)

Such attempts by non educators to redefine the curriculum have to be understood within the context of attempts to discredit the public sphere and those who work in it. In the new language of markets and rationalisation, of structural efficiency and microeconomic reform, of public choice and consumer democracy, those who serve the public interest, in health, education and welfare especially, are regarded as serving themselves first — of constructing public agencies in their own private interest. As Sir Keith Joseph remarked ' I think that national agencies tend to be producer lobbies. One of the main virtues of privatisation is to introduce the idea of bankruptcy, the potential of bankruptcy' (into such agencies) (quoted in Ball 1990, 63).

Or, as I have put it elsewhere in response to the question 'who owns the curriculum?

> ... there are multiple owners, the most powerful of which are, government, industry, parents, communities and (last and least), teachers.
>
> The reason for teachers being last and least is articulated politically in ways that suggest that teachers have got a little above themselves: indeed, they have 'captured' the curriculum in the same way they have 'captured' schools, and constructed it in their own self interest. The role of politicians, suggested most colourfully by Jim Callaghan in his Ruskin College speech but taken up with enthusiasm by politicians of the Right and Left, is to storm the 'secret garden of the curriculum' and reclaim it for those who are the 'end-users' of the 'products' of schooling: government and industry, not entirely forgetting the immediate 'consumers' of educational services: the parents (Bates 1991b, 1).

The result is a rather confused and educationally inadequate attempt to develop curricula and assessment practices which will both integrate and standardise the Australian education system in ways similar to those to be used to standardise the various gauges of the various Australian railway systems (9).

But this can itself be seen as part of the logic of standardisation which is fundamental to the establishment of the global economy based upon global markets whose very competition is a mechanism for the standardisation of industrial and economic procedures and the elimination of the social. As Kemmis puts it:

> The development of national curricula for schools, and the rationalisation, integration and differentiation of universities at the national level, suggests that education is following a similar pattern to that in the increasingly internationalised economy: a pattern of unification and massification of production and diffusion, fragmentation and privatisation (individualisation) of consumption (Kemmis 1992, 21).

This is precisely the world of the global economy, of the economic rationalist which marginalises the state, marginalises notions of public interest and public virtue and seeks to reduce education to skill formation directed towards the competitive bidding within labour markets and towards a redistribution of wealth from wages to profit share.

Educational administrators, along with teachers, educational researchers and educational theorists can choose to serve such a culture, or they can stand with those who the World Educational Fellowship survey reports as being committed to a different vision of the future — one which places civic virtue and social need at the centre of the educational enterprise.

Our culture — the culture of educational administration — has for far too long accepted the doctrines of Taylorism. This sees administrators as simply here to ensure the separation of conception from execution in education and to oversee the implementation of policy determined elsewhere. Such a culture displays a lack of confidence which we should now, as mature professionals, set aside. For, as Stephen Kemmis has suggested with regard to educational researchers:

> ... we should not resile from making deliberate claims that we can, within the limits of the discourses we employ, represent aspects of the world of education in

> ways which are more coherent, less self-contradictory and more practical than some of the alternative perspectives presented by groups less committed to coherence and comprehensiveness, and more wedded to the service of technical and instrumental values, interests and self-interests which are external to (and sometimes contradictory to) the interests of education and society (Kemmis 1992, 31).

What this clearly means is that we middle level administrators have an obligation to construct a culture of educational administration which articulates its relationship with those aspects of Australian society which celebrate a common future based upon common concerns: a future in which the fruits of our intellectual endeavour are no longer grafted precariously on the edge of our social needs; a future in which our celebration of our culture — the integration of knowledge, beliefs and values that galvanise us to action — is not subordinated to the self interest of market ideals, but is a celebration of our shared social aspirations for social justice. We need to show our commitment to a caring, just, morally responsible, compassionate and ecologically aware society because the culture of educational administration is a great deal more than a naive description of the way we are. It is also a declaration of what we wish to become.

Notes

1. The role of management in this process is discussed at length in *The Economist* (May 1990) which provides data to show that over the decade of the '80s while corporate profits fluctuated around an index of 100 and production workers wages rose from 100 to 140, chief executives pay rose from 100 to 260. *The Economist* suggests that chief executives have become 'preoccupied with making a market in their own prosperity'. Similar trends are evident in Australia (Bates 1991a; McGregor 1990).
2. The first of these Trojan horses was the phalanx of 'neo-classical' economists who were trained in our universities in the '60s and '70s. The second was the organisation of public and government opinion by the Australian clones of the British and American 'think-tanks' of the New Right as Pusey details (1991, 227-8).
3. For a challenging and somewhat frightening assessment of some of the possibilities here see Kenway, Bigum and Fitzclarence, 1992.
4. One of the most poignant of current commodifications of culture is surely the commodification of Aboriginal cultural knowledge through the marketing of Aboriginal art and its associated questions of ownership, authenticity and its relationship to cultural identity. See also Robins, 1991 for a wider discussion.
5. For a somewhat gross example of this phenomenon in Australia see R Smith 'What price great art?' in the *Sunday Age* 28 June 1992.
6. An acute example of the battle over market versus scientific determination of curriculum is the current agitation over 'creationism' and evolution as a basis for the science curriculum.
7. Though, as Caldwell and Spinks (1992) remind us, this is as much a result of financial stringency as of anything else.
8. Blackmore (1992) provides a particularly useful account of the effects of such situations on feminist administrators within the Victorian system.
9. Interestingly enough both suggestions came from the Special Premiers' conference and appear on consecutive pages of the report.

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NOTES FOR INTENDING CONTRIBUTORS

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All correspondence should be addressed to:

Executive Officer
The Australian College of Education
PO Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605

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Further information, including membership enquiries, can be directed to:

Executive Officer
Australian College of Education
PO Box 323
CURTIN ACT 2605
Ph: (06) 281 1677 Fax: (06) 285 1262

James Darling House 42 Geils Court, Deakin, ACT 2605
Telephone (06) 281 1677

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